

VZCZCXRO8625
OO RUEHLH RUEHPW
DE RUEHPW #0044/01 0630433
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 040433Z MAR 09
FM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7864
INFO RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 4922
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 4638
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 1418
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 1052
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0814
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE 1776
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE 1783
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUMICEA/USSOCOM INTEL OPS CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PESHAWAR 000044

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/4/2019

TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: FATA AND NWFP: WEEKLY INCIDENTS OF TALIBANIZATION, FEBRUARY
20 - 26

REF: A) PESHAWAR 39 B) PESHAWAR 38 C) PESHAWAR 28

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, Peshawar,
Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

Introduction

- - - - -

11. (C) Tehrik-i Taliban (TTP) deputy Faqir Mohammad announced a unilateral ceasefire in Bajaur on February 23. Inspector General Frontier Corps Tariq Khan told consulate on February 25 that no ceasefire had been agreed to and that Bajaur operations would continue (Ref A).

12. (C) Tehrik-i Taliban (TTP) leader Mullah Fazlullah in Swat announced an indefinite unilateral, ceasefire on February 24, but under strict "Islamic" conditions (Ref B). The announcement extended the initial 10-day unilateral ceasefire proclaimed by the TTP on February 14 (Ref C). Local contacts report that the terms of the ceasefire have not been put in writing.

13. (C) South Waziristani militant leaders Baitullah Mehsud and Mullah Nazir and North Waziristan's Gul Bahader, rival commanders, announced on February 22 a new alliance -- the "Shura Ittehad ul-Mujahideen" (Mujahideen Unity Council). The new council's publicly stated aim is to focus resources and attacks on Coalition forces in Afghanistan. Further background Islamabad septel.

Bajaur

- - - - -

14. (U) The following is a summary of events in Bajaur Agency, where the Pakistani military has been conducting military operations since August 2008:

February 22: Security forces reportedly killed six militants, including two commanders.

February 23: Tehrik-i Taliban (TTP) deputy Faqir Mohammad announced a unilateral ceasefire in Bajaur. Meanwhile, the Frontier Corps Inspector General, Major-General Tariq Khan, told reporters that his forces would have Bajaur under control by "mid-March."

February 25: Tribesmen reported hearing no jet fighters, gunship helicopters or artillery guns for two days. The commander of forces in Bajaur, Colonel Asad, told reporters that he had given a "two-day" deadline for residents to vacate their houses before launching operations. Col. Asad observed that militants in Bajaur were using residents as "human shields" and not permitting them to leave their areas. Security forces reportedly arrested several militants, recovered remote control bombs and a large cache of weapons during a search operation. The army took a group of journalists to Inayat Qalay and Bhai Cheena, which security forces recently captured from militants.

February 26: The Political Agent of Bajaur, Shafirullah Khan, announced at a grand jirga of tribal elders that the government had declared a ceasefire in accordance with the demands of the Mahmood tribes. The Bajaur PA also warned that the ceasefire would be conditioned on no further attacks by militants on government forces.

NWFP

- - -

15. (U) The following incidents have occurred in the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and settled areas of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP):

February 20, Dera Ismail Khan: A suicide bomber killed 32 people and wounded more than 140 during a funeral procession of about 1,500 for a Shi'a killed a day earlier.

February 21, Lakki Marwat: Two suicide bombers were killed when their car prematurely exploded on the way to a Frontier Corps fort.

February 21, Kohat: Two Frontier Constabulary personnel were

PESHAWAR 00000044 002 OF 004

inured by an improvised explosive device (IED). Elsewhere, two policemen were shot and killed.

February 22, Swat: Militants kidnapped the new District Coordination Officer (DCO) of Swat, but released him a few hours later, along with his six guards, in exchange for two militants.

February 23, Swat: Militants reportedly kidnapped two workers from the Awami National Party (ANP) and four soldiers from the Frontier Constabulary. Militants also lashed six people in Mingora for smoking hashish.

February 23, Kohat:

February 23, Bannu: A suicide bomber blew himself up near a temporary office of the Cantonment police chief, killing one policeman and injuring another.

February 23, Peshawar: A police guard was killed when he flung himself onto a suicide bomber to prevent him from entering a compound where judges and senior police officers live. Elsewhere, militants fired two rockets on the outskirts of the city, damaging two houses and several vehicles.

February 24, Swat: Tehrik-i Taliban (TTP) leader Mullah Fazlullah announced a unilateral, indefinite ceasefire, but under strict "Islamic" conditions.

February 24, Nowshera: Angry IDPs from Bajaur blocked the main road for Peshawar to Rawalpindi to protest the administration of Jalojai Camp in using "delaying tactics" to register them at the camp.

February 25, Swat: Some acts of killing and looting took place in Matta, Kabal and Khwazakhel while IDPs returned to their homes. One man was shot dead and the house of a local ANP leader was set on fire and looted. Despite these incidents, headlines featured such stories as "Swat Fast Returning to Normalcy," citing the return of police and the opening of

markets, businesses, banks, government offices and schools. Militants reportedly disbanded checkpoints and stopped carrying heavy weapons in public. Residents reported that taliban militants still occupied the roadside, but were unarmed. Underscoring the fragile state of peace and the risk of a return to violence, scores of militants stopped a convoy of vehicles carrying rations for troops. A report from an Italian news agency claimed that the taliban of Swat were given \$6 million in compensation for the ceasefire.

February 25, Peshawar: Militants fired nine rockets and mortar shells on the outskirts of the city, injuring a villager and damaging two houses.

February 25, Kohat: Two motorcyclists were killed by a 15 kg roadside bomb. The bomb was likely intended for a police vehicle passing nearby at the time of the explosion.

February 26, Peshawar: Militants fired three rockets from Bara into the outskirts of the capital.

February 26, Kohat: Militants fired five rockets at security force checkpoints. Security forces announced the launch of another military operation in the area.

FATA

- - -

16. (U) The following is a roundup of incidents of talibanization in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Frontier Regions:

February 20, Khyber: Militants tried to bomb a bridge in Landi Kotal, but only one of three bombs exploded. The bridge suffered no damage and traffic resumed after a one hour delay.

February 21, Khyber: Militants fired a rocket at a fuel tanker in Landi Kotal, killing the driver.

PESHAWAR 00000044 003 OF 004

February 22, South Waziristan: Three Pakistani militant groups formed a new alliance in South and North Waziristan. Militant commanders Baitullah Mehsud, Maulvi Nazir, and Hafiz Gul Bahadur joined forces, announcing the creation of an umbrella group, "Shura Ittihad al-Mujahideen" (SIM). The new militant organization accepted Mullah Omar and Osama Bin Laden as its leaders and declared it would fight the "infidels" together.

February 23, Darra Adam Khel: Militants blew up a government boys' school and five houses. Security forces fired artillery on suspected militant hideouts.

February 25, Orakzai: Militants released a videotape message of a missing Canadian journalist, Beverly Giesbrecht, who was kidnapped in Bannu in November 2008.

February 25, Khyber: The agency chapter of Terhrik-i-Taliban (TTP) threatened the government with a tit-for-tat response if it launched a military operation against Lashkar-i-Islam (LI) in Bara. Members of the Bara Peace Committee alleged that the Khyber Political Agent (PA) and the security forces had violated a peace agreement by launching air strikes against LI headquarters on February 23. During that copter attack, Mangal Bagh reportedly escaped, but three were killed and 13 wounded. Businesses and markets were closed in Bara to protest a security forces strike on a flour distribution center. Local businessmen staged a protest march at mid-day.

February 26, Kurram: After 12 tribesmen were kidnapped on the agency's main road, consulate contacts reported that militants had closed the Thal-Parahinar Road. Residents reportedly fear an imminent return of Shi'a-Sunni sectarian violence in the agency, after an October 2008 peace deal established several months of relative calm.

February 26, Mohmand: Militants killed two civilians and took six others hostage during a clash with local residents. Militants accused the locals of "looting weapons" from their camps during recent military operations.

February 26, Khyber: Residents of Bara blamed the political administration for worsening law and order in their tehsil. Locals complained of indiscriminate air strikes, arbitrary detention of tribesmen, unjustified fines and excessive electricity loadshedding.

Government Response

- - - - -

17. (U) This is a summary of government responses to "creeping talibanization" according to press and consulate contacts:

February 20, Mohmand: The Political Agent (PA) reopened a gate leading into the agency after it had been closed for four months for security.

February 22, Peshawar: Chief Minister of Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) Amir Haider Khan Hoti announced that 30,000 rifles would be distributed to villagers to cooperate in the fight against militants. A military spokesman said that the Pakistan Army had not been consulted about the plan.

February 22, Darra Adam Khel: Security forces reportedly arrested 15 suspected militants.

February 23, Khyber: The Frontier Corps claimed to destroy the main communication center used by militants in Landi Kotal, killing 10 and destroying 15 vehicles.

February 23, Dera Ismail Khan: The NWFP Inspector General reportedly ordered a house-to-house search to curb sectarian violence in the district.

February 24, Islamabad: The Federal Minister for Special Initiatives dispatched 10 trucks containing relief goods worth 10 million rupees for IDPs.

PESHAWAR 00000044 004 OF 004

February 25, Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari asked the Government of Pakistan to immediately implement a 25 billion rupee development package for FATA and NWFP as part of a strategy to fight militancy.

February 25, Kohat: The police reportedly arrested four suspected militants in a search operation.

February 26, Peshawar: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Assistant High Commissioner visited Kachi Garhi IDP camp along with the Operations Head of World Food Program (WFP). Both officials committed to improving life inside and outside the IDP camps.

February 26, Peshawar: The District Administrator for Afghan Refugees and the Additional Commissioner for Security visited the Azakhel Camp and provided meat to 7,344 refugee families.

February 26, Kohat: Security forces announced the arrest of 21 suspected militants.

February 26, Bajaur: "Anti-Taliban" FM radio was heard throughout the agency from 7 pm to 10 pm local time from 12 FM radio channels. Security forces established "Peace Radio" to present the "noble, dignified and true image of Islam." Militants operate at least 18 FM radio stations in FATA; eight in Bajaur, seven in Khyber, two in Mohmand and one in Orakzai. Militants also operate more than 10 illegal FM channels in NWFP, including Swat.

TRACY